

## Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC033502
<b>Inspection date</b>	13/07/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	David Martin
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	03/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

---

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home accommodates up to seven children aged from 12 to 17 years. It provides long term placements for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The building is detached and set in its own grounds. Accommodation is spread over four floors. The bedrooms and shared bathrooms are on the upper floors. On the ground floor, there is a staff office, kitchen, dining room and lounge. To the rear of the home there is an enclosed garden, which incorporates a five-a-side football pitch and a floodlit games area. The home is located within a short distance of a number of schools and other youth, health and leisure facilities.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people are admitted to the home when they are at their most challenging but over the course of their placements they make good progress in developing self-control and self-esteem. The staff make strenuous efforts to stand by, and support young people as they resolve personal issues and progress towards adulthood. There have been notable successes in the educational achievements of individual young people and the home is strongly committed to supporting young people through their education. School attendance is excellent.

On admission, young people often display behaviour associated with attention deficit disorder, poor attachment with significant adults and personal trauma. It is to the home's credit that it places a high priority on the emotional wellbeing of young people and has successfully supported young people to engage with mental health and therapeutic services. Behaviour management plans and placement plans are individualised and address the specific needs of each young person. The home has sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced staff to meet the individual needs of young people in a flexible way.

There were no actions or requirements made at the last inspection and none are made as a result of this inspection. This reflects the fact that the home is aware of its strengths and has identified for itself, areas for improvement and consolidation.

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in key aspects of their lives. The young people currently placed in the home have complex personal issues to resolve. They present the service with a wide range of challenges that include offending behaviour, attachment disorders, and anti-social behaviour within the home and, occasionally, in the local community. Despite this, the staff team are able to engage young people in activities that promote personal development. This includes regular contact with external agencies such as the child and adolescent mental health team and youth offending service. There is an established nurturing culture in the home that allows young people to grow and, over time, to form a positive self image as they approach adulthood. Staff work intensively with young people on an individual basis to explore with them alternative ways of behaving and to develop self responsibility and self control. During the inspection young people interacted with staff and each other in a good humoured and positive way. Requests for support were made appropriately and staff were actively engaged with young people in completing tasks.

Young people's health needs are met well. They are encouraged to eat healthily and lead active lives. One of the young people's mother commented that they, 'always looks clean, smart and well fed'. The young people have access to a local gym and are currently trying to put together a football team to play competitive matches with other teams in the area. Staff understand the significance of attending to young people's health care needs and have been successful in ensuring that young people engage with mental health services to address concerns about their emotional well-being.

Young people's school attendance is very good. In general, attainment reflects the difficulties many of the young people have in engaging with education. Nevertheless, one young person achieved 'student of the year' at college and has aspirations to attend university. The staff actively liaise with schools and attend parents' evenings and school reviews. Educational achievements are celebrated by the home and certificates are displayed on the notice board. This home's approach contributes to the young people's individual development of self esteem.

Young people are able to contribute to the way in which the home is run. They have their own house meetings every fortnight. The meetings have a clear agenda and enable the young people to make suggestions and state preferences on range of issues such as the meals that are provided, activities and holidays. Anti-bullying and safety are standing agenda items. On an individual basis, young people can express their wishes and feelings about their aspirations for the future and can contribute directly to any review of their care. The home has placed young at the centre of decision-making and actively encourages them to participate.

Young people have contact with their families and the arrangements are clearly set out in placement plans. During the inspection the parents of one young person visited the home and it was evident that they felt comfortable with the staff and had the opportunity to see the young person in private. This engenders positive relationships between the home and young people's families.

## **Quality of care**

The quality of the care is **good**.

On admission to the home, many of the young people have difficulties relating to adults in a positive way. The current group of young people are at various stages in developing more positive relationships. There is strong evidence to show that as young people mature and work with staff to improve their behaviour, they are able to internalise measures of self-control. Despite being faced with daily challenges from young people, the staff are able to implement non-physical intervention techniques to modify behaviour. It is to the home's credit that it has not had to use restraint for a long time. Sanctions are applied with discretion and are reviewed by the home's management team. There is an effective reward system that the young people both understand and enjoy achieving their targets. One young person was particularly proud of meeting his targets for the week. There are comprehensive behaviour management plans in place and issues of consistency are addressed by the home's manager. The home is able to draw on the experience and expertise of professionals from partner agencies to respond to persistent negative behaviour.

Young people confirmed that they had received the children's guide to the home and that it explains to them how to make a complaint. Young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plans. The plans are of high quality and identify young people's individual needs in key outcome areas such as health, education, emotional well-being and personal identity. This ensures that all staff are familiar with young people's needs and can respond to them in an individual way.

Handover meetings are used successfully to exchange information about each of the young people and to plan for the shift ahead. The manager is encouraging the staff team to be well prepared for each shift and to have available a range of creative ideas and activities to keep the young people engaged in positive and constructive use of their time.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

During the inspection young people said that they feel safe, well cared for and like living at the home. One young person commented that if they did not like it they, 'wouldn't come back'. The staff team have completed child protection training and are confident about reporting any concerns to senior members of staff. They have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, sexual exploitation and risk-taking behaviour. In general, young people rarely go missing from the home. When they are absent without permission the home is proactive in its attempts to locate them or to maintain telephone contact with them to ensure they are safe.

As noted above, restraint of young people has not occurred in the period since the last inspection. The staff team have undertaken training which enables them manage negative and anti-social behaviour without resorting to physical intervention. Other training, dealing with issues such as attachment disorder, has provided the staff with good insight into why the young people behave the way they do. This has contributed to the development of a nurturing environment rather than one that is confrontational. Negative behaviour is challenged in a way that encourages young people to consider alternative, positive ways of getting what they want and interacting with others.

Some of the young people are vulnerable to being drawn into the negative behaviour of others, and also experience a degree of bullying. The staff are proactive in managing this and it is challenged as and when it arises. Similarly, some young people are equally vulnerable to being encouraged by their peers to participate in risk-taking behaviour in the local community. This has included climbing on the roofs of outbuildings and other properties. It is addressed in individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans.

Young people are protected by the home's recruitment procedures and ongoing suitability checks. All prospective staff are robustly vetted prior to employment and criminal records bureau checks of existing staff are carried out at regular intervals. The home's approach to safeguarding ensures that young people are looked after safely.

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.



The Registered Manager and staff team hold appropriate qualifications and have a broad range of experience in working with young people. They have participated in training events that enable them to understand the individual needs of young people and to keep them safe. There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet the needs of young people and they are deployed in a flexible way to best meet the demands of each shift.

The home is, in many respects, experiencing a period of transition. A number of young people have successfully moved on to independence and adulthood and there has been an influx of young people in their early teenage years who present a different set of challenges. In the main, the staff have risen to the challenges; but are in the process of reflecting on their own practice to ensure that they can successfully meet the needs of this younger age group.

The home has a comprehensive service improvement plan. It sets out the successes and strengths from the previous year, areas for consolidation, and aspirations and targets for the year ahead. It is specific in its goals, clear about how improvement can be measured and identifies who is responsible for implementing each section of the plan. Notable successes include: the engagement of young people with mental health services; work with social work colleagues to ensure that all young people have a personal education plan and the involvement of young people in staff recruitment. Young people benefit from a service that is actively seeking continuous improvement.

The Statement of Purpose was reviewed in April 2011 and it accurately reflects the service that is provided. It provides a concise and comprehensive account of the way in which the home is run and clearly sets out the home's commitment to improving outcomes for young people. The manager regularly reviews progress and carries out auditing exercises that are complemented by regulation 33 visits. The reports produced following monitoring visits, are thorough and identify areas for improvement.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.